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Children's Books for Spring

Publishers Weekly

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DORIS BAKES A PIE
DORIS AT SAGAPANNO BEACH
WINTER CARNIVAL IN DORISLAND
TOPSY-TURVY DORIS
A NEW DRESS FOR DORIS
DORIS DOES HER HOMEWORK
DORIS AND MATHILDA, HER LITTLE FRIEND FROM AVENUE B
DORIS, YOUNG BROWNIE OF TROOP 927
DORIS GETS A CAT
DORIS' DAY AT THE ZOO
DORIS VERSUS MATH
DORIS VISITS HER AUNT JUDY
CIRCUS FUN
THE LARGE BOOK OF DORIS
MEET m... Lucinda
DORIS, GIRL FROM HOLLYHOCK HEIGHTS
STAYING HOME WITH
DORIS T CAMP HI-DE-HO
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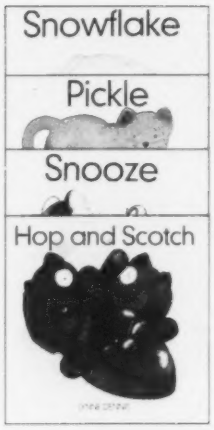

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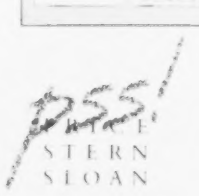

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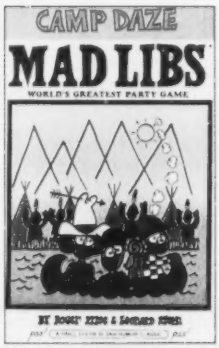

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FEATURES

SPRING 1988 CHILDREN'S BOOKS 107
The News Is Nonfiction *by Kimberly Olson Fakih* 108
The Gallup Survey:
Who Buys Children's Books? *by Leonard Wood* 112
A Striking Season: New Authors 113
Showing and Selling Original Art *by Amy Meeker* 120
Dr. Dolittle Is Back *by Maureen J. O'Brien* 122
Clement Hurd, 1908–1988 123
N. M. Bodecker, 1922–1988 124
Children's Bestseller List 125

SPRING CHILDREN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS 127

DEPARTMENTS

NEWS OF THE WEEK 98
Addison-Wesley, Pearson Merge for $283 Million
House Bill-Writing on Berne Starts Amid Uncertainties on 'Formalities'
New Imprint at Flammarion to Publish Young Americans
PSP Ponders Internationalization, Growing U.S. Trade Market
Cross Currents
Random to Issue New Version Of Embattled Salinger Bio
Obituary Notes: Jack Elliott Stoddart, Isaac N. Epstein, Adrian Wilson

TRADE NEWS 159
Spring Ahead to Fall Books

BOOKSELLING 164
Chicago's Children's Bookstore: Imaginative owners combine retail and theatrical talents in an award-winning business
Biography Update

AUDIO/VIDEO PLUS .169
Children's Audio and Video Listings

PW INTERVIEWS.....176
Amy Schwartz

FORECASTS..... 178
Fiction.....178
Nonfiction 184
Paperbacks 190
Children's Books 194

COLUMNS

Highlights 95
Letters 96
Calendar..... 96
People 104
Rights 168
Talk of the Trade 173
My Say: *Hugh O'Neill* 174
West Watch 175
Index to Forecasts 200
Index to Advertisers 203
Weekly Exchange 204
Paperback Bestsellers.....210
Hardcover Bestsellers.....212

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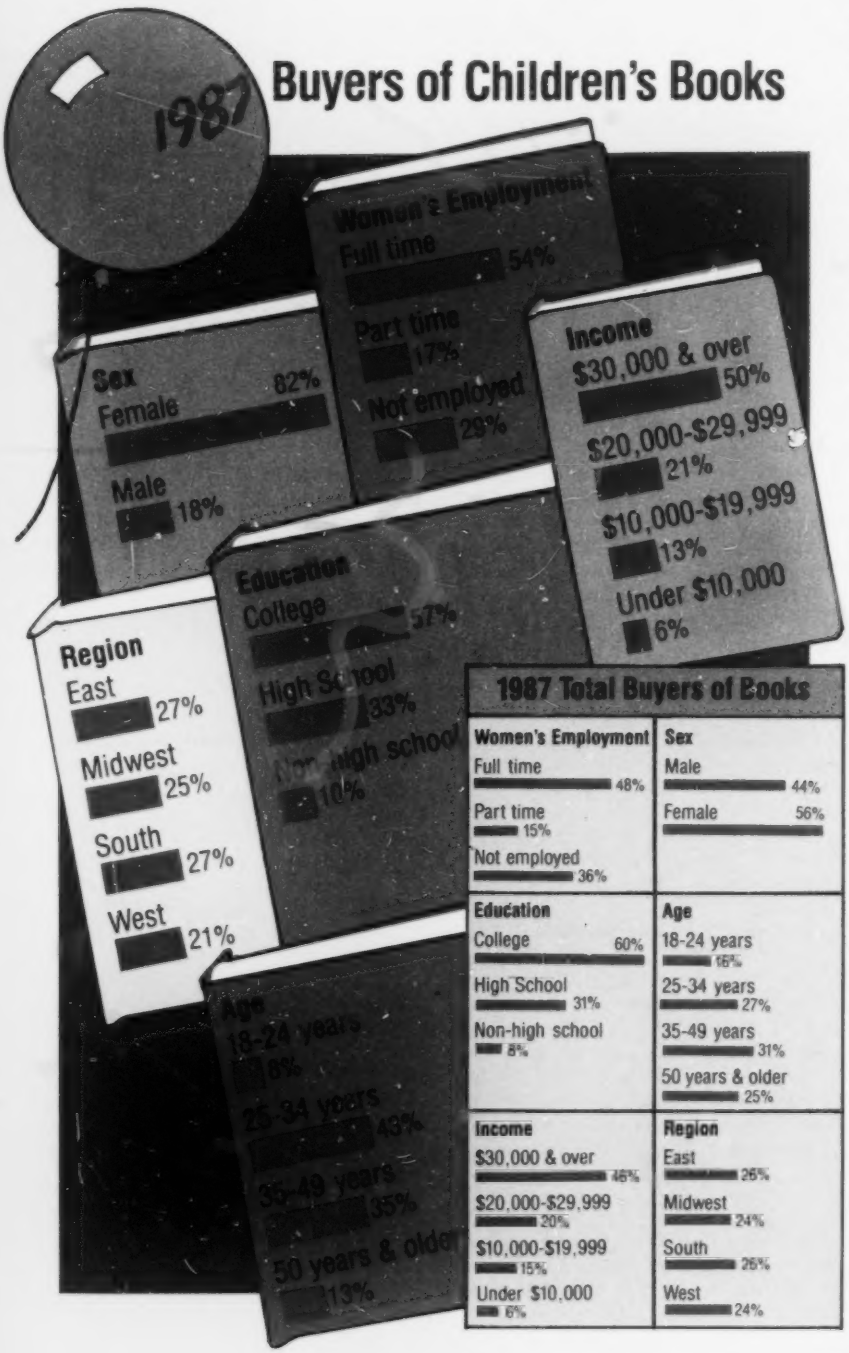
BY LEONARD WOOD

Who Buys Children's Books?



Gallup studies throughout 1986 and 1987 have shown that children's books represent on average 6% of all books purchased during the two-year period. But the actual year-by-year figures grew from 5% in 1986 to 7% in 1987.

Buyers of children's books present a rather distinct profile when compared to the overall book-buying population. More than eight in 10 of children's book buyers are women (82%), for instance, compared to only about half of total book purchasers (56%). And relative to all book buyers, purchasers of children's books are disproportionately middle-aged, that is 25–49 years (78%).

Not only are the buyers of children's literature unique, but the books themselves differ considerably from general books. For example, general books purchased during 1987 were nearly evenly divided between fiction and nonfiction titles; children's literature, however, was predominantly fiction (70%), with nonfiction titles representing only 29% of purchases. As to format, 60% of all general books purchased in 1987 were paperbacks, and 39% were hardcovers. When it comes to children's books, these proportions are almost exactly reversed; 55% were hardbacks, while 45% were softcovers.

Despite the dominance of the hardcover format, children's books are less expensive than average. The average cost of a paperback children's book in 1987 was $4.50, but the cost of softcovers in general was 24% higher ($5.60). The price differential between children's hardcovers ($8.20) and the general average ($16.70) was even more dramatic. And almost half of the children's books purchased were gift items (46%), while this was true of only 13% of overall book purchases. □

NOTE: Results are based on 10,180 telephone interviews conducted among a nationally representative sample of adults, age 18 and older, throughout 1987.